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MANAGEMENT AUDIT REPORT

of

BUREAU OF RIGHT OF WAY AND LAND  
Department of Public Works

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Right of Way and Land is the real estate agent for the Council-controlled departments as well as some independent City departments. In addition to the traditional real estate functions performed by the Bureau, Federal law has expanded its work load in recent years to require the City to provide relocation assistance to individuals whose property is taken for City purposes. The Bureau is organized as is shown in the accompanying organization chart.

To fulfill its responsibilities, the budget for 1976-77 provides total direct appropriations of \$3,894,322.

In conducting this audit, members of the audit team interviewed personnel in other City departments and representatives of other governmental agencies which are either involved with the Bureau or for purposes of comparing procedures.

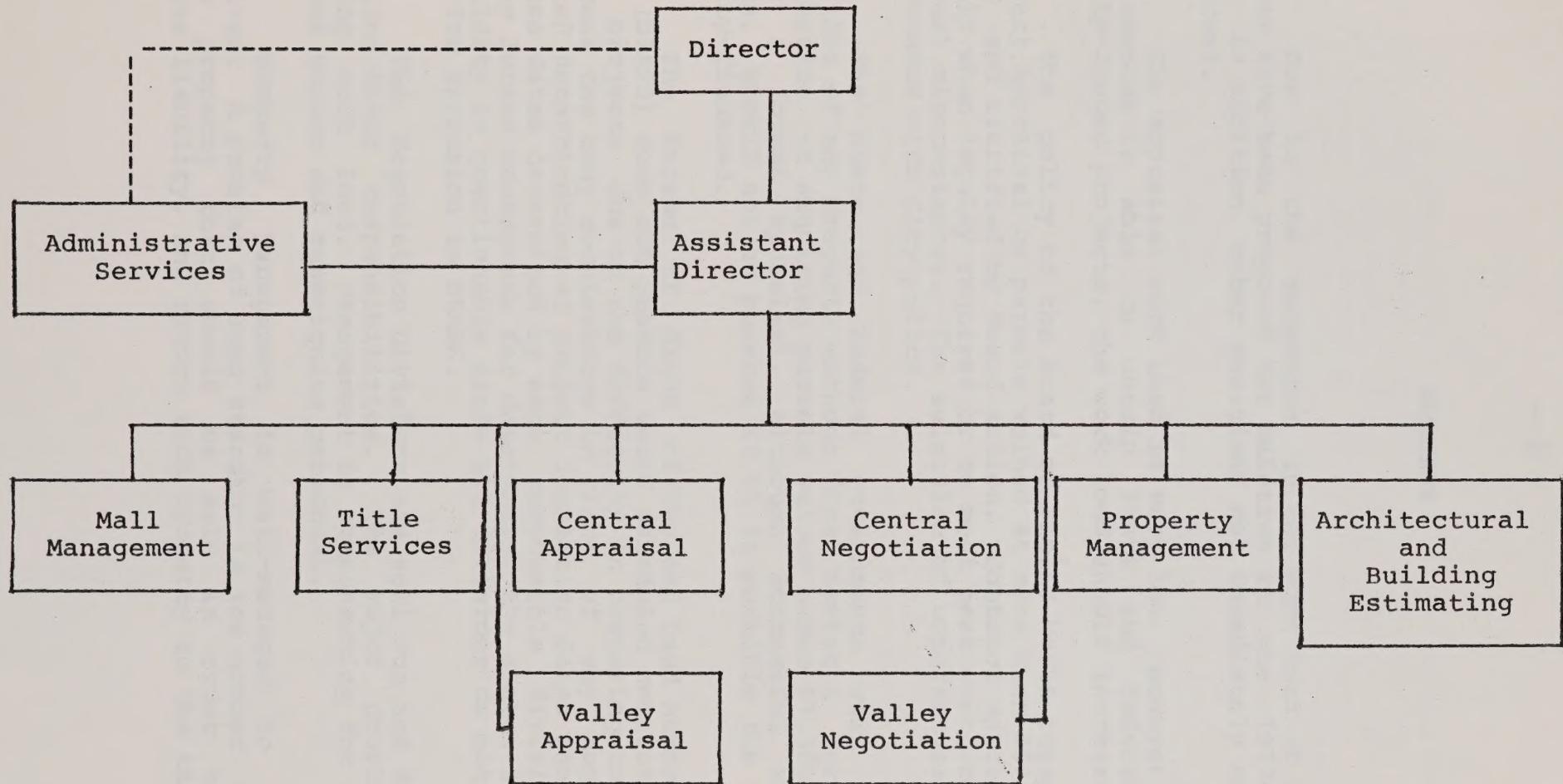
This is the third management audit of the Bureau of Right of Way and Land. This report updates two previous audits released in 1967 and 1972. Prior audit recommendations were reviewed and satisfactory progress has been made on their implementation.

This report has been reviewed by the Board of Public Works Commissioners and the Director, Bureau of Right of Way and Land who have indicated their general agreement with it's findings. In view of the extended period of review by the Board, action has either been completed or begun on a number of the recommendations.

The Audit Team acknowledges the fine cooperation of the personnel of the Bureau of Right of Way and Land.



BUREAU OF RIGHT OF WAY AND LAND





## SUMMARY

Due to the reduction in the work load of the Bureau, six positions have been proposed for deletion in the 1977-1978 Proposed Budget. In addition, other positions not immediately needed are being kept vacant.

The appraisal work load is very low. However, as the Bureau of Engineering is able to obtain State and Federal approval of Federally-funded projects, the work load should increase.

The policy of the Board of Public Works regarding obtaining a contract appraisal on parcels valued at more than \$50,000 should be amended and clarified by Board action. Contract appraisers should be used only when legally required or to meet peak work load requirements or unusual circumstances. The selection of contractors should be made in accordance with City policy.

The State and Federal governments will not approve the acquisition of any property without first having a formal appraisal. The practice of acquiring parcels valued under \$1,000 by negotiation without a formal appraisal, although successful on City-funded projects, should not be pursued if it is possible the project will be Federally-financed.

The Bureau of Right of Way and Land Automated Scheduling System (BRASS) does not produce valid scheduled completion dates for Bureau projects due to the difficulty in preparing computer programs to process the many complexities in right of way acquisition. The automated determination of project completion dates should be dropped, and these dates determined by each responsible division. BRASS is used by Bureau management for determining the status of projects, but its validity is questionable since all divisions do not submit project status for inclusion in BRASS.

The Negotiation Divisions are well run and do a good job in fulfilling their responsibilities. The major problem is one of declining work load. Management is compensating for this by holding positions vacant and reassigning personnel.

Property Management is well-managed to accomplish its objectives. A problem of long standing is the number of parcels of surplus property that should be sold in order to derive funds, eliminate liability, and return such property to the tax rolls.



The quality of work produced by the Title Services Division is good, but some of the methods and procedures tend to limit productivity and increase costs. Providing for the availability of low cost copies of official records for Title Examiners and streamlining the title report preparation procedures will increase productivity. These changes should result in an estimated savings of \$21,000 per year in contract title costs during the first year and \$25,000 per year thereafter.

In the Property Transfer Section, the development and implementation of a procedure which will provide for the availability of several demand checks at time of recordation of title will enable a savings of approximately \$6,500 per year in contract escrow costs to be realized.

The Bureau is underrepresented in minorities and women. A major reason for this has been the unavailability of qualified women and minority personnel with experience in some specialized functions of the Bureau. The "bridge" class of Real Estate Trainee has recently been established to provide for upward mobility. Five Real Estate Trainee positions were included in substitute authority in the 1976-77 Budget. However, because of a low level of activity and budget limitations, only one position has been filled.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board of Public Works instruct the Director, Bureau of Right of Way and Land to:

1. Report to the Board and recommend a contract appraisal be made only on those parcels where legally required or involving unusual circumstances.
2. Follow City policy as set forth in Council File 72-475 S-5 in selecting and recommending contract appraisers to the Board.
3. Discontinue acquisition by Authority for Expenditure (AFE) without appraisal on those projects which the Bureau of Engineering indicates Federal financing may be used.
4. Establish a training program for all employees involved in right of way appraisal and acquisition to ensure that all State and Federal requirements are met.
5. Personally monitor the work load of the Negotiation Divisions and take whatever action is necessary to keep personnel assigned to these Divisions productively occupied.

It is recommended that the Director of the Bureau of Right of Way and Land:

6.
  - a. Request the Data Service Bureau to modify BRASS to eliminate the automated scheduling portion and emphasize the project status reporting capability of the System.
  - b. Obtain input from the division heads on the operational requirements and necessary modifications of BRASS.
  - c. Investigate the feasibility of using the remote terminal system and computer output microfilm proposed for the Bureau of Engineering's "Project Status Report".
  - d. Poll all recipients of BRASS reports to determine if they require all copies they receive.
  - e. Produce BRASS reports on a four week period basis instead of bi-weekly.



- f. Direct division heads to:
    - (1) Adhere to "Instruction No. 500, Updating Scheduling Reports," so that the status of parcel acquisition can be determined.
    - (2) Manually enter the expected completion date for each project for which they are responsible.
  - g. Include all major projects in each division and in the City Attorney's Office in BRASS.
7. In cooperation with representatives from the Board of Public Works Office, the Bureau of Accounting, and the Controller's Office, develop and implement a procedure to provide that all demand checks relating to property transfers be made available at the time title to the property is recorded. After implementing this procedure, use contract escrows only to handle work overloads in the Property Transfer Section and to comply with requests of property owners to use a private escrow firm.
8. Take the following actions to increase productivity and reduce costs in the Title Section:
- a. Request purchase of a microfilm reader-printer to provide for mechanized retrieval of information and arrange for its installation in the commercial title company plant.
  - b. Reduce to an absolute minimum the abstracting of information on official records from microfilm or microfiche readers. Instead, obtain hard copies of the records from the reader-printer.
  - c. Analyze report preparation procedures and report formats and modify them to reduce report preparation time. Procedural modifications should include: (1) a sharp curtailment in the use of narrative statements, and (2) inclusion of photocopies of portions of official documents as a part of the title report when a long legal description or other lengthy information is required in the report.
  - d. Eliminate from title reports complete legal descriptions of the entire parcel whenever they are not required.
  - e. Formally request the Bureau of Engineering include on all preliminary right-of-way maps furnished to the Bureau all known ownerships shown on maps in the City Clerk's Land Records Division or the County Assessor's Office.



9. Take action to improve representation of minorities and women in the Bureau by:

- a. Instructing the Bureau's Affirmative Action Representative and its Advisory Affirmative Action Committee to identify areas in the work force where there is under-representation of minorities and women and where there is limited opportunity for upward mobility of employees.
- b. Working closely with representatives of the Affirmative Action Division of the Bureau of Personnel in developing and implementing action programs which will assist current employees in upgrading their skills and abilities and prepare them for advancement to higher level positions.

NOTE: It is estimated that implementation of these recommendations will result in determinable savings as follows:

<u>Recommendation No.</u>	<u>Annual Savings</u>
1	\$15,000-20,000
6	5,000
7	6,500
8	21,000 1st year 25,000 thereafter
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$47,500-52,500</b>



## STATUS AND EVALUATION

### Appraisal

The appraisal function is divided into two divisions. The Central Appraisal Division is located in City Hall and the Valley Appraisal Division in Van Nuys City Hall. The primary function of both Appraisal Divisions is to appraise real property and property rights to be acquired, leased, or sold by the City. They also provide preliminary estimates of acquisition costs for real property for budgetary purposes and for the City Engineer to determine the most economical route for right of way alignment.

The City's program to obtain Federal funding for street projects under the Federal Aid Urban Program (FAUP) has significantly affected the appraisal work load in two ways. First, due to both Federal and State requirements, appraisals are very detailed and more time-consuming than they are on City-funded projects. Second, since both Federal and State approval must be obtained before any work can be done on Federally-funded projects and the City Engineer has not obtained those approvals, the Appraisal Divisions have very low work loads.

Board Policy Regarding Contract Appraisals. At the time of this audit, the Bureau Director operated in accordance with the policy of the Board of Public Works, adopted October 16, 1974, which required contract appraisals on each parcel appraised at more than \$50,000. The President of the Board stated it is not the intention of the Board to require an appraisal on every parcel estimated to be valued at more than \$50,000. He stated it is the Board's policy that the Director, Bureau of Right of Way and Land report to the Board on each parcel involving acquisition costs of more than \$50,000 and recommend whether or not in his opinion a contract appraisal should be made. The policy of the Board as stated by the President should be formally adopted. In view of the Bureau's low work load, contract appraisals should be limited to those parcels where legally required or involving unusual circumstances. See Recommendation No. 1.

Selection of Contract Appraisers. The Council established a City policy (Council File 72-475 S-5) with respect to awarding contracts for personal services. The Bureau uses independent fee appraisers on occasions, but does not comply with all requirements of said policy. Compliance with Council policy will in no way affect the flexibility of the Bureau in selecting qualified appraisers. See Recommendation No. 2.



Acquisitions by AFE. Negotiators have authority to acquire small parcels of property which they estimate to have a value of less than \$1,000 if the estimate of value is approved by a Principal Appraiser. They acquire the property by Authority For Expenditure (AFE) without a formal appraisal being made. This procedure has been very successful for the City and should be continued for acquisitions which will not be Federally financed.

When the City decides to seek Federal reimbursement on a project, acquisition without a formal appraisal is not permitted. The Federal government requires a written appraisal for the acquisition of any parcel no matter how small, including voluntary dedications. On those projects which the Bureau of Engineering indicates Federal financing may be used, no acquisition should be made without first having a written appraisal. See Recommendation No. 3.

Need for Training. Right of way acquisition has become increasingly complex in recent years due to the involvement of the Federal government in providing funds and setting forth rules for right of way acquisitions. Since most of the right of way acquisitions now involve Federal financing, it is imperative that the appropriate employees be thoroughly familiar with the rules, regulations, and guidelines established. The procedures as set forth by the Federal government and expanded by the State involve every phase of right of way acquisition from the very initiation of the project to its disposition. These rules cover project design, appraisal, negotiation, and relocation.

In the past, the Bureau has been very active in keeping its employees fully trained. In recent years, however, this practice has lagged and the Bureau has depended primarily upon on-the-job training. As a consequence, employees are not trained as rapidly as they should be, are not kept up-to-date, nor are they trained as thoroughly as is necessary to do the increasingly complex job. See Recommendation No. 4.

#### Architectural and Building Estimating

The Architectural and Building Estimating Division is responsible for providing architectural and building estimating services for properties being acquired by the City. Since most of their work comes from the Appraisal Divisions, the Architectural and Building Estimating Offices are located with the Appraisal Divisions. There are two Division employees in the Valley Office and four in the Central Office. Other work is initiated by the Negotiation Divisions, the relocation assistance program, the City Attorney, and the Bureau of Engineering.



The Division prepares architectural drawings which are used to estimate reproduction costs of buildings on property purchased by the City. Drawings show floor plans, elevations, and other details. Another type of drawing, which includes more detail, is prepared in cases involving severance damages to buildings when only a portion of the building is being purchased by the City. This type of drawing is used to demonstrate what could be done if the owner is required to remodel the building.

#### Negotiation

Negotiations to acquire property and property rights are conducted by two divisions, Central Negotiation Division and Valley Negotiation Division. Assignments are generally by a predetermined geographical boundary. Occasionally, management will cross boundary lines to balance work load or for other reasons.

Los Angeles City is unique in that it is one of the few governmental jurisdictions that acquires property by what is commonly known as a "partial take." This concept is less costly than a "total take", but is often more difficult to "sell" to the property owner. However, because of agent effectiveness, property owners who refuse to sell property to the City usually do so because of the price offered, not because of the partial take.

The main problem of both Divisions is one of declining work load. Gasoline tax funds have been one of the main sources of funding public improvements. Recently, these funds have been diverted to finance other City programs, thus reducing the number of projects in the City's improvement program. Federal funds have been relied upon to make up the difference, but the requirements of Federal funding have proven to be time-consuming and cumbersome. The time involvement of Bureau personnel from the initial stages of a proposed project to final approval can be in excess of one year. This causes delays in processing the work, and considerable staff time can be expended on a project prior to approval. Sometimes, after considerable staff effort has been expended, a project is not approved for funding by the State.

In order to compensate for this decline in work load, the Negotiation Divisions have postponed the filling of vacant positions. During the audit, six of the 26 authorized positions were vacant. Due to the difficult nature of the negotiation process, there must necessarily exist a nucleus of well-trained and competent Real Estate



Agents. Some individuals have been reassigned to do work that due to budget limitations has never been accomplished. Management must continue to closely monitor the work load of these Divisions to assure that each employee is kept productively occupied. See Recommendation No. 5.

### Title Services

The Title Services Division is headed by a Title Officer and consists of a Title Section and a Property Transfer Section.

Title Section. The Title Section conducts title searches in connection with assessment, capital improvement, and other public improvement projects. Title searching and related work are also performed for Council-controlled departments upon request. The Section is staffed with experienced professionals and the quality of the work is excellent. The work load in this Section is being maintained at a high level. As a result, it is necessary to have some work performed on a contract basis.

Most of the title work is performed at a commercial title company's plant which provides office space for City employees. Title personnel also search records in some City and Los Angeles County departments and in Los Angeles County court locations. Title work involving improvement projects financed through the general fund is normally performed by City employees. For projects financed by other means, such as by gasoline tax or Federal funds, the title work has normally been performed by commercial title companies on a contract basis.

Although the quality of the Bureau's title work is high, some of the work methods and procedures result in excessive time being spent by Title Examiners in routine aspects of the work. This reduces productivity and increases cost. For example, Title Examiners spend a considerable amount of time abstracting information from official records, using microfilm and microfiche readers at the title company plant or at the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's Office. The screen images of the records are frequently hard to read on the equipment provided for use by City personnel at these locations. Because of this, and the fact that often considerable information must be abstracted, an excessive amount of time is spent by Title Examiners in recording information on working papers, and later in transferring



the information from the working papers to pages of the title reports. By its very nature, this procedure also tends to increase errors.

To reduce the amount of time spent by Title Examiners on routine tasks, the abstracting of information from microfilm readers should be sharply reduced, and provision should be made for obtaining low cost hard copy printouts from microfilm records of the official documents. Microfilm records of deeds recorded between 1960 and 1976 are available in the City Clerk's Land Records Division, and beginning with calendar year 1977, complete microfilm records of all official documents are also available.

When conducting title searches, information must be obtained from various types of official records for past years. No provision is currently made to provide Title Examiners with low cost copies of these records, however, and this results in the time-consuming abstracting process. A complete library of official records of all types for past years is available on microfilm and on microfiche in the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's Office and on microfilm in the commercial title plant used by the City. Title searching productivity can be significantly increased, costs reduced, and documentation improved if hard copies of all documents relating to each search can be made available to Title Examiners. The best way to accomplish this is to provide a City-owned reader-printer at one of these complete libraries of official records.

Another time-consuming part of title work is the preparation of title reports by Title Examiners. Excessive time is spent in report preparation because of extensive use of narrative statements and because long legal descriptions or other lengthy statements are manually printed on the report forms. Report preparation procedures and report formats should be reviewed and modified so as to minimize the use of narrative statements. The practice of manually printing lengthy statements in the reports should be discontinued. Instead, photocopies should be made of lengthy portions of the documents, such as long legal descriptions, and these should be included either as an integral part of the reports or as attachments to the reports.

The preliminary right-of-way maps provided by the Bureau of Engineering show only the property information which appears on the Bureau's district maps. These maps do not include additional ownerships in the project area which are shown on maps maintained by the City Clerk's Land Records Division and on the Los Angeles County Assessor's maps. More time is required to complete the title searches if all known ownerships are not shown. When preparing preliminary right-of-way maps, the Bureau of Engineering should check other maps so that the maps furnished to the Bureau of Right of Way and Land will show all known existing ownerships.



In past years, the Title Section's procedures for obtaining information pertaining to tax liens and possible bond and assessment liens on property from various City and County offices were time-consuming, both in terms of the time required to search the records and the non-productive travel time involved. This information is readily retrievable from a computer terminal located at the title company plant.

In the case of public improvement projects or other projects involving "partial takes", it is our understanding that it is not necessary to include the complete legal description of the entire parcel in title reports to satisfy Federal or State requirements. Legal descriptions of the entire parcel should be excluded from title reports whenever possible. If complete legal descriptions are required by personnel in other divisions in the Bureau, or by other City departments, a copy of an official document containing the description should be attached to the title report.

During this audit, through the joint efforts of the Management Audit Team and personnel in the Title Services Division, some initial steps were taken towards achieving needed improvements.

These include:

- Discussing with Bureau of Engineering personnel the importance of having the Bureau of Engineering include on all preliminary right-of-way maps all known ownerships shown on maps in the City Clerk's Land Records Division or the County Assessor's Office. The Bureau of Engineering includes known ownerships on some, but not all, preliminary maps at the present time.
- Obtaining permission from officials of a commercial title company that City employees may obtain information pertaining to tax, bond, and assessment liens via the terminal located at the title company plant at no cost to the City. In addition, required forms were designed, procedures were implemented, and Title Examiners are currently retrieving tax lien information from the computer terminal.
- Obtaining permission from officials of a commercial title company for provision of floor space in the title company plant to locate a City-owned microfilm reader-printer at no cost to the City.

To fully achieve all potential improvements in the Title Section, the Bureau should take additional actions, including acquisition and installation of a microfilm reader-printer in the



title company plant and the streamlining of report preparation procedures. The resulting increase in productivity in title searching will enable the staff to handle all title work in-house and to save an estimated \$21,000 in contract title costs during the first year and \$25,000 per year in subsequent years. See Recommendation No. 8.

Property Transfer Section. Personnel in the Property Transfer Section perform functions relating to the transfer of title for acquisitions and sales of City property. The staff is experienced and produces high quality work and the work is well controlled. Work load for the Section has been low for some time.

Historically, title transfer functions have been performed by both in-house staff and by contract escrow companies. A recommendation was made in each of the previous management audits that the use of contract escrows be reduced because Bureau employees are capable of handling the title transfer work for all types of property transactions. The recommendations were implemented following both audits, and there has been a substantial reduction in the amount of contract work. However, some escrows are still being performed by contract.

Much of the work which is contracted involves site acquisitions and other "total takes." This work must be done by contract now because pro-rations of funds are involved and several checks must be available at closing time when title to the property is recorded. Current City procedures do not permit making several demand checks available at close of escrow.

Contract escrow work is not only expensive, but also time-consuming for in-house staff. As a matter of practice, contract escrow companies require for their purposes that a policy of title insurance be provided when they handle an escrow. Therefore, the City is charged both an escrow fee and a title policy fee. In most instances, the City doesn't need the title policy since it is self-insured. The City pays an average of \$386 per parcel in escrow fees and title policy fees for this contract work. The Bureau's Title Transfer Coordinators perform considerable work during contract escrows. It actually requires more time per parcel than it does to perform the entire job in-house.

The Bureau should take the initiative in developing a procedure which will provide for the availability of several demand checks at time of recordation of title. This can be accomplished by establishing a fixed period of time for processing through City departments the demand requests required for transfers of title to property, and setting a title recording date for each parcel in advance so that it corresponds with the end of the demand processing period. The Department of Water and Power follows such a procedure,



and this reportedly enables its Land Division to handle all of the property transfer work in-house. After implementing this procedure, which will result in savings of approximately \$6,500 per year in contract escrow costs at the current level of activity, the use of contract escrows by the Bureau should be limited to the handling of work overloads in the Property Transfer Section, or to comply with requests by property owners that a private escrow firm be used. See Recommendation No. 7.

#### Scheduling System (BRASS)

In June, 1974, the Bureau implemented a computerized information system called BRASS to assist its management in work scheduling, personnel utilization, and project control. Reports are produced every two weeks listing in priority order all right-of-way acquisition projects for each phase of acquisition. Report information includes: responsible division assignment, scheduled completion date, status of parcel acquisition, number of hours assigned, and the actual hours used to complete each phase of parcel acquisition on active jobs.

Six months after BRASS was implemented, the Bureau requested modifications to correct scheduling routines which were not functioning properly. Due to changes in personnel in the Data Service Bureau and the difficulty in preparing computer programs to process the many complexities of right of way acquisitions, modifications are still in progress. One reason for the computer program complexities is that parcel appraisal and negotiation are frequently spread over several years.

The forecasted completion dates for each phase of the parcel acquisition shown on BRASS reports are not valid because several of the Bureau's divisions do not submit project status of work assigned to their divisions. Thus, BRASS is only partially meeting the objective of providing Bureau management with project status information.

During the audit, interviews with all division heads and the Assistant Director indicated that BRASS is a worthwhile tool to top-level Bureau management in the control of the Bureau's work program. There was some expression that BRASS should be modified to provide only the status of projects in the Bureau and to drop scheduling routines produced by the computer. There also were statements to the



effect that parcel scheduling dates should be manually applied using dates provided by the division which has responsibility for the project.

On June 12, 1975, the Director of the Bureau issued an instruction on the updating of BRASS scheduling reports. It required each division to: review each project, make notations as to corrections or changes in the status to that date for each project, return the runs to the Administrative Services Division not later than five working days after receipt, and send copies of all action documents showing status changes of projects to the Scheduling Section. Some of the operating divisions are not complying with this instruction. Bureau management should ensure compliance.

Interviews with division heads revealed that they are receiving more copies of the computerized reports than needed and on too frequent a basis. All recipients of reports should be contacted to verify that they still need the computerized reports sent to them.

The Bureau of Engineering is making efforts to update its "Project Status Report" through the use of remote terminals and eventual replacement of existing printouts with computer output microfilm. The Bureau of Right of Way and Land's Project Status Report has many of the same requirements addressed in the Bureau of Engineering's Project Status Report. Proposed improvements in remote terminals and computer output microfilm are applicable to both systems.

If implemented, the recommendations in this report will assure a worthwhile system and reduce the Data Service Bureau's annual operating costs approximately \$5,000. See Recommendation No. 6.

#### Property Management

The Property Management Division is well managed and, like other divisions in the Bureau, is experiencing a low work load. The Division is responsible for many diverse activities, mainly as a result of Federal and State requirements. Programs were assigned to this Division "by chance" rather than as a logical extension of work previously assigned. A study has been requested by the Board of Public Works to determine if this is the proper organizational unit for all responsibilities assigned.



The relocation assistance program has recently experienced a change in the scope of its activities. As originally mandated by the State, activities consisted of assisting persons relocated to find decent, safe, and sanitary housing and providing relocation assistance in monetary terms. In addition to performing these duties, conceptual studies are now required to evaluate the effects of relocation on projects before the State will approve any project for funding. Manpower to perform these studies is available because of low work load in the Bureau.

The Property Management Section is responsible for managing all City property under the control of the City Council. Management of property is required pending use of that property for the purpose for which it was acquired and includes normal landlord-tenant responsibilities. Lease negotiation is another of its responsibilities.

The problem of excess City property was recognized in the audit of 1972. The Director states that the City has approximately 7,500 parcels of land estimated to be worth \$17 1/4 million. Of this number, about 25 percent are of such size and location as to be considered reasonably salable. Approximately 3,000 are steep hillside properties acquired for "mountain preserves". Many of the 6,000 parcels are small pieces of land left over from improvement projects and have a value only to the adjoining property owner. While it is difficult to ascertain a value in these cases, the Bureau should attempt to negotiate their sale to derive revenue, reduce bonded indebtedness, and to eliminate potential City liability. It should be noted that the City Council has placed a "freeze" on the sale of some 125 parcels of land in the Venice area and all of the mountain preserve properties.

The procedures to sell surplus property are time-consuming and cumbersome and should be revised in an effort to make them simpler, and less costly. Consideration should be given to delegating authority to the Board of Public Works to sell all small parcels of land to the adjoining owner for a reasonable sum.

The usable parcels should be sold. A large amount of effort goes into each sale, not only by the Bureau staff but by several other City departments. In the past, some sales have been less than successful because of lack of public interest and such sales may have cost the City money based upon the total cost to conduct the sale.

A sound program to dispose of such property would eliminate many management problems, as well as potential City liability, and would generate revenue and, in some cases, return monies to the Gasoline Tax Fund for future improvement programs. The Board recently



adopted a report prepared by the Bureau which, if fully implemented, will greatly assist in this program.

Mall Management

Approximately three years ago, it was recognized that a specialized organizational unit was needed to handle the management, leasing, and operation of the Los Angeles Mall complex in the Civic Center. To satisfy this need, a Mall Management Division was established in the Bureau of Right of Way and Land.

Only two professional employees - a Mall Manager and an assistant - and one clerical employee are assigned to the Division. Division personnel are handling matters relating to the management and operation of the Mall in a very capable manner. The staff actively seeks out responsible tenants, prepares and negotiates leases for space in the Mall, and is responsible for securing and maintaining insurance coverage for the Parking Authority. Furthermore, Division personnel provide promotion and publicity for the Mall and cooperate and work with tenants and personnel in various City departments on matters relating to operation of the Mall. Currently, the City has leases or firm commitments for approximately 85 percent of the available space.

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Division is responsible for personnel administration, timekeeping and reporting, budgeting, accounting control relating to the operation of the Bureau and for federally aided projects, administration of the records retention program, initiation of project work orders and project files, and processing of contracts for outside appraisal work. The Division also performs administrative work relating to affirmative actions matters. The scheduling and control of right of way projects, specialized functions performed by the Division, are discussed in another section of this report.



Affirmative Action

Most Bureau employees are in the professional, technician, and office/clerical occupational categories. There is significant under-representation of minorities and women in the professional category, in which the majority of positions are in the Real Estate Agent and Real Estate Appraiser series of classes. This has been due to the low availability of qualified women and minorities, except Asian Americans, in these specialized fields. However, the Bureau has hired and promoted minorities and women when available. At the time of the audit, 24 percent of the employees in the Real Estate Appraiser class and 38 percent in the Senior Real Estate Agent class were minorities.

Most of the positions in the technician category are Title Transfer Coordinators and in the Title Examiner series. Here again, the Bureau has been limited in making appointments to entry level positions because of the lack of experienced women and minorities. In this category however, one of the two authorized Senior Title Examiner positions is filled by a minority employee, and all Title Transfer Coordinator positions are filled by women, 67 percent of whom are minority employees.

In the office/clerical category, almost all of the employees are women, with over-representation of Blacks and Asian Americans and underrepresentation of Spanish-surnamed employees.

In order to provide upward mobility for employees in lower level classes to positions in appraising, negotiating, managing real property, title examining, and relocation assistance, the Bureau of Right of Way and Land, in conjunction with the Personnel Department, has recently developed specifications and established the "bridge" class of Real Estate Trainee. Five such positions were included in substitute authority in the 1976-77 Proposed Budget. Due to budgetary constraints, only one of the positions has been filled to date--by a minority female employee. It is anticipated that this class will enable personnel in some of the higher clerical classes to gain experience and qualify for advancement to entry level professional and technician positions. Another "bridge" class being used by the Bureau is Relocation Assistant. Four of the six persons currently employed in this class are minority and female employees.

Due to the reduced level of activity in the Bureau and the resultant budget cuts and hiring constraints, and the limited availability of qualified women and minorities in two of the three major occupational categories, limited progress has been made thus far towards achievement of desired affirmative action objectives. The



hiring and promotion of qualified minorities and women when available in past years, and the Bureau's initiative in developing the new "bridge" class of Real Estate Trainee, however, are evidence of its commitment to the affirmative action program.

At the time of the audit, the administration of the affirmative action program in the Department of Public Works was undergoing a change. In past years the responsibility for the planning and administration of the affirmative action program in the Department was handled on a centralized basis for the most part with little involvement by bureau directors. Departmental numerical goals were established each year and incorporated into the City's program, but bureau directors were not requested to formally prepare numerical goals for their bureaus each fiscal year.

A change was initiated a few months ago whereby the responsibility for establishing numerical goals and for developing action programs to achieve those goals was transferred to the bureaus. As a first step, during the third quarter of fiscal year 1976-77, each bureau was requested to calculate numerical goals for each of their major occupational categories and for job classes containing 20 or more employees. The calculations were based upon a procedure set forth by the Bureau of Personnel which involved the use of information contained in the Personnel Department's Work Force Analysis Report for the second quarter of fiscal year 1976-77, information provided by the Bureau of Personnel relating to the availability of college graduates in entrance level classes and the available work force in promotional classes in the Department of Public Works, and the employee turnover rates developed by each bureau.

It is too early to objectively evaluate the performance of the Bureau of Right of Way and Land under its newly expanded affirmative action responsibilities. The Bureau appears to be complying satisfactorily with current requirements, however. The numerical goals have been calculated and submitted to the Bureau of Personnel as requested. The Bureau has recently established an Advisory Affirmative Action Committee. Although the Committee has not been very active to date, the purpose of this committee will be to review the affirmative action program in the Bureau and make recommendations for improvement. Quarterly reports are submitted to the Bureau of Personnel which summarizes affirmative action activities and plans.

Due to the current limitations in the ability to improve representation through the hiring of new employees, the Bureau's major effort should, at this time, be directed toward upgrading the skills of present employees through additional training and other action programs to improve upward mobility. It is recommended that the Bureau's recently established Advisory Affirmative Action Committee



identify areas of under-representation, and then work closely with the Bureau of Personnel's Affirmative Action Division in developing additional upward mobility programs. These programs may include in-house, or on-the-job and outside training opportunities, employee counseling, or other appropriate activities which will enable employees to move to other jobs which offer opportunity for advancement. It is also suggested that personnel in other bureaus and departments be contacted to ascertain whether upward mobility techniques currently in use also might be appropriate for the Bureau. See Recommendation No. 9.

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